

First Sunday in Advent Dec. 3, 2017

Introduction

Advent

In our culture advent has developed a split personality as a time of light and of shadow. The commercial countdown to Christmas begins while the Church calls us to a period of deep reflection and spiritual preparation for the celebration of the mystery of God becoming flesh. On the one hand Advent is a season of dazzling secular light. Cities and towns are lit up in fantastic ways . It is also a time of spiritual quieting as we are called to look within. We are pulled both ways

as the culture says, "Get busy" and the Church says "quiet down" to prepare for Christmas.

Christmas evokes powerful memories of feelings and hopes in all of us. It speaks to deep yearnings within every person for home, family, friendship unity and peace. Every year we look for Christmas to fulfill those desires. Today we try to pack all we expect of Christmas into one day rather than the traditional twelve days of the Christmas season as was the case in earlier times. A restoration of the healthy majesty of the Christmas season can be a gift of our time.

Nevertheless, we all want a memorable Christmas . But what are we willing to give up to bring the promise of Christ's to our soul? St Paul gives us a key in today's second reading as he writes about the need to "cast off the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light".

Are we willing to cast off the deeds of darkness ? Are we willing to match the preparations we make on the outside over the next four weeks with similar preparation in the inside ? This advent is the time to look at the quality of our Catholic life :our regular participation at mass , our personal prayer life our

dealings with others , our honesty , our truth telling , our respect for the reputation and property of others ,our commitment to our family, to our spouse , our commitment to the great issues the Church has embraced today – the poor the sacredness of human life the strengthening of family life. It is very tempting and very easy to get so wrapped up in the artificial lights of this season that we can forget the true light the light of Christ. AMEN.

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